

Innovation Exchange 2026

Inspiring Skills Excellence: Technology, Teaching and T-Shaped Learning

Thursday 8th October 2026 | 09:30 - 16:30

Greater Birmingham and Solihull Institute of Technology,
Holt Street, Birmingham, B7 4BF

Technology shaping working practices, the future of skills and innovation

Join UVAC and colleagues from education, industry, research and the wider technical skills community for an inspiring Innovation Exchange exploring how technology is transforming working practices, enhancing learning and creating new opportunities to improve accessibility, inspire inclusion, and develop the workforce of the future.

Together, we will explore how systems leadership can strengthen education and skills through people, places, partnerships and possibilities, while developing T-shaped learners—individuals with deep technical expertise, broad transferable skills and the adaptability to thrive in an AI-enabled world. Discover how UK and international best practice can help create a more connected, innovative and inclusive tertiary education system that delivers equally valued academic and technical pathways.

Why this matters

The UK faces a projected shortfall of up to one million engineers by 2030, while employers across priority industry growth sectors continue to report shortages of people with the digital, AI and technical skills needed for the future economy.

Strengthening these capabilities is not simply an education challenge—it is an economic imperative. Closing digital and AI skills gaps could contribute more than £23 billion annually to the UK economy, improve workforce productivity, increase earnings and help address growing shortages of digital, data and AI talent. The challenge is clear—but so too is the opportunity.

Why attend?

Hear from leading speakers from education, industry, research and policy as they explore the future skills needed for work, learning and life. Discover practical examples of how innovative technologies are transforming teaching, learning and workforce development, and gain insights into emerging workforce trends, digital and AI capability, and international best practice.

Through evidence-informed discussion and collaboration, explore how stronger partnerships can widen participation, enhance quality, build workforce capability and create future-focused technical education systems. Connect with further and higher education colleagues, employers and key stakeholders to exchange ideas, build connections and champion future skills for learners of every age, level, and sector.

